

“Why Are You Afraid? How Is It That You Have No Faith?”

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Mark 4:35-41 has a distinct place in Mark's narrative. It is intentionally placed just after an extended discourse that explained kingdom ideas. Jesus has clearly shown from the parables the distinction between children of light and those who continue to abide in darkness. He has equally shown how the rule or control of God continues to steadily unfold and moves toward ultimate fulfillment with certainty and confidence.

The story before us reinforces these truths. He is God and has absolute authority and control over all things created. I believe the storm was a test to see if they learned what He had just taught. Some tests are “passed” and others are “failed” but all are intentional and purpose filled.

Here is my premise: **All of life's storms are an intentional part of God's redemptive purpose for us.** Romans 8:28 says that everything works together for good. The “good” concerns our justification, our sanctification, and our glorification. The “everything” includes all of life in all of its joys and sorrows.

There is no aspect of our existence that is outside of God's meaningful purpose for us. Everything in life is moving toward, existing in, and flowing from our redemption.

Every hurricane, earthquake, tsunami, drought, blizzard, flood, or tornado, every sunrise, sunset, babbling brook, gentle breeze, sun kissed setting are parts of His redemptive purpose for us in all of its aspect and is thus “good.”

Every trial, test, or temptation is an intentional part of God's purpose that contributes to our redemptive experience. Nothing falls outside this purpose. There are no accidents or random or arbitrary acts or events. Everything has purpose, everything has meaning, and everything has intent. There is a reason behind each and every aspect of your life. Everything about your life is moving toward, existing in, and flowing from your redemption.

Your job, your parenting, your grand-parenting, your spouse, your heartache, your sorrow, your joy and your triumphs are all a part of God's redemptive purpose for your life. Nothing is wasted and nothing is forgotten.

God brought His disciples into the storm in order that He might “test” them to see if they truly grasped what He just taught them. God controlled the storm. He sets in motion events in order that storms would exist. Storms do not have a life of their own. They are not outside of what God is doing. God is doing the “storm.” All of life is a storm. Our response to storms reveals whether or not we “get it.” Do we really believe God is in control? Do we really believe His purpose will be fulfilled? Do we really believe He cares for us unconditionally, personally, and meaningfully?

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There is a great comfort that is ours when we begin to realize that all of life in all of its complexities is a part of His redemptive purpose for us. God has determined this storm in my life, and the storm will reveal whether or not I actually believe in His control and His compassion. Do I honestly believe that God will finish His work in me and through me to those around me?

Storms are never pleasant, and they are never easy. Often it is so dark that we lose our way and begin to question whether or not there is any purpose or reason for what we are going through other than mere chance and poor misfortune. The death of a loved one, the passing of a child, a still born baby or miscarriage, divorce, rebellious children, unemployment, financial ruin, chronic sickness, failed health that is left undiagnosed, all of these and a varied multitude of black events are all designed by God for us to show just how much we are resting in Him. Such events do not come to us from the hand of a despotic malignant ruler, but the kind and gentle hand of a Shepherd Savior King who has determined the means as well as the end. God is in control of our dark moments, He does care for us passionately, we are the objects of His unadulterated affection and yet loss and pain still happen.

As a shepherd, I call you to trust God in your affliction. Know that He is working everything for good and His purpose for you is being fulfilled. He will not fail no matter what the moment looks like. Embrace Him as the loving, gracious, and kind God that He is, and see that He is in control and that He does truly care.